

Soviet Secret Weapon Killed 300 in '60 Blast

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LONDON, Oct. 16 (AP) — Former Premier Khrushchev's vaunted secret weapon blew up in 1960, killing Marshal Mitrofan I. Nedelin and 300 others, the Manchester Guardian said today.

The secret weapon about which Khrushchev boasted was a missile with a nuclear propellant, Victor Zorza, the Guardian's expert on Communist affairs, reported.

Quoting secret reports of Oleg Penkovsky, a Russian colonel sentenced to death in 1963 for spying for the West, Zorza said:

"The countdown went according to plan, but the new missile failed to leave the ground. The observers waited for some 20 minutes, then came out of the shelter. At this point the missile exploded, killing 300 people, among them the commander-in-chief of the Soviet missile forces, Marshal Nedelin."

The Guardian account said the accident occurred in the fall of 1960 as scientists rushed to test the weapon in time for the October Revolution anniversary that year.

The Russians announced Oct. 25, 1960, that Nedelin

had been killed in an air accident.

[The Italian Continentale news agency, which specializes in Communist affairs, said on December 8, 1960, that Nedelin was killed in a "catastrophic explosion" with 100 other top soldiers and scientists at an unidentified missile site.]

Khrushchev spoke of "a fantastic weapon" on Jan. 14, 1960, when he addressed the Supreme Soviet (Parliament). But he did not give any details.

On March 16, 1962, he indicated the weapon had been perfected. In a Kremlin speech he called it "a global rocket."

Penkovsky's secret reports will be published next month. Zorza apparently got an advance look at the reports, which were made to British intelligence and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

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COL. PENKOVSKY

MARSHAL NEDELIN

Missile Disaster Told by Spy

Col. Oleg Penkovsky, who since has been executed as a spy for the West, reported the death of Soviet Marshal Mitrofan I. Nedelin and others in the malfunction of a Russian missile with a nuclear propellant in 1960, the Guardian of Manchester, England, said. Story on Page A1.